



The Asbury **BEACON**

December 2022/January 2023

Volume 22, Number 10

THE VISION OF ASBURY

*To Make Disciples for
Jesus Christ for the
Transformation of the World.*

THE MISSION OF ASBURY

*To Inspire People of
All Generations to
Love, Learn and Lead Through
Worship, Education, and Service.*

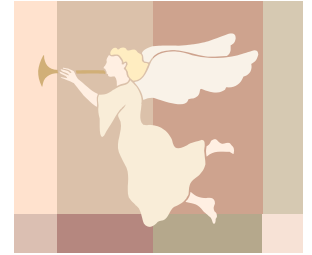
THE ASBURY MOTTO

*No Matter Where You Are on
Life's Journey, You Are Welcome Here!*

Pastoral Letter: "Hear the Angels Sing"

Verse 3 of "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" by Edmund Sears

*"And ye, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,
Look now! For glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!"*



Isn't it ironic that the Christmas season, noted for brightly decorated homes, happy carols, gift-giving, and holiday gatherings, is also the season with the highest percentage of deaths, illnesses and severed relationships? There are more cases of depression identified during this time of the year, than any other season. Frequently, while in a shopping mall, crowded with people, some may feel their most isolated and lonely.

It is almost as if the trimmings of the season place in bold relief the separation between where we feel our life "ought to be" with "where it actually is." It is a time when many will ask, "What's the matter with me?" "Why do I feel so sad or discouraged?" "Am I a fraud?" "Where is my faith?"

In some ways it seems as if the angels' message of good news and great joy has fallen on deaf ears. Or perhaps, the message was for another time, but not our time - directed towards another people, but not us.

Before we allow ourselves to disintegrate into despair and cynicism, I think it is appropriate for each of us to ask of ourselves a spiritual question:

Are we deaf or have we stopped listening?

The message of hope sung first by the angels came to a world torn by hatred, poverty, and violence. The angels' message came to a world in pain. The message came to a people in pain. Throughout all of sacred history, God's visitation to humankind, whether through angels, prophets, the Holy Spirit, or the person of Jesus, has been directed to those who are empty, longing to be filled. It is precisely to the spiritually hurting person, that the voices of the angels are directed.

As the Christmas hymn suggests, life can be crushing and the road can be weary. But this season encourages us to find in the chaos, some moments of rest so that we may listen and hear again the message of the angels, and feel within ourselves the power of hope.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Laura

The December-January **BEACON** is sponsored by **Bruce & Lorraine Irwin** and **Dale & Marianne Scott**.
Our newsletter is a very important tool in helping us to communicate with and keep our Asbury family connected!
Thank you **Bruce, Lorraine, Dale and Marianne** for being our "BEACON ANGELS" for December-January.

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From the Editor

ANGELS - GOD'S MESSENGERS OF JOY, HOPE, LOVE AND PEACE

Just as Santa has helpers, God also has helpers. Angels are God's messengers. I also believe they are God's helpers. What are the qualifications needed to become one of God's "angels?" Only God knows that for sure, but I would guess it is important to have an open heart and an open mind. When I opened my heart to the Holy Spirit, I opened a wonderful line of communication that has brought me such *Joy, Hope, Love and Peace*. When I am feeling sad, confused or hurt, an "angel" always seems to appear to bring me that message of *Joy, Hope, Love and Peace*. Recently, I was feeling a little down. A couple from First Presbyterian Church appeared in my office. They brought with them a clock - a clock with a message from God. This clock was not just an ordinary clock. Every hour the clock gives out a verse of scripture from the Bible. Ken put new batteries in the clock, set it and left it in my office. For a couple of weeks nothing happened. Then one afternoon at 2:00 I was alone in the church when a voice boomed out from the clock. It was a message from God: "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you, plans to give you a hope and a future.'" - Jeremiah 29:11. I can't begin to tell you what *Joy and Hope* that brought me.

Recently, as is always the case, I was trying to fit too many things into a small time frame. I became overwhelmed, and I didn't make it to Pastor Laura's Bible Study. The next day there was a voicemail from Pastor Laura and I believe a message from God. The message I heard in the voicemail was: "I missed you at class tonight. I am calling to let you know I am thinking of you, and **I care.**" Those two words brought me an overwhelming feeling of *Love and Peace*. Thank you Pastor Laura!

I pray that God uses me this Christmas season to bring a message of *Joy, Hope, Love and Peace* to someone who is hurting. I also pray that all of you will open your hearts and minds to be God's "angels" of *Joy, Hope, Love and Peace!*

Is Santa Claus one of God's "angels?"

The message this Christmas Season from Santa Claus and from God is
BELIEVE

Sue Beaman



ASBURY HAS A NEW LAY LEADER!

I am excited and humbled to be the next Lay Leader of Asbury beginning January 1, 2023. I want to thank Orié Phillips for his devoted efforts as our Lay Leader in 2022. The Lay Leader responsibilities are taken from the Book of Discipline. Here are the responsibilities briefly:

- Foster awareness of the role of laity within our congregation, in the home, workplace, and community.
- Meet regularly with the pastor to discuss the state of the church and the needs for ministry.
- Attend any committee meeting at Asbury.
- Be involved in study and training opportunities for all members of our congregation.
- Assist in advising the Church Council of opportunities available for a more effective ministry at Asbury.
- Inform the laity of differing opportunities and be in communication with church members to understand their ideas and concerns.

As part of my charge from Pastor Laura, we will “research future paths” for Asbury and we really want your ideas. My plan is to contact you sometime between January and April 2023 and have a brief conversation about Asbury’s future focused on 4 questions:

1. *Focusing on how Asbury might grow and thrive in the future, what are your ideas, focus areas, programs, and other things that we should consider doing?*
2. *In your opinion, what things are deterring Asbury from growing and thriving in the future?*
3. *How do we extend/expand our Christian presence outside the walls of our church?*
4. *What else is on your mind when you think about Asbury?*

Please give these questions some prayerful consideration before our discussion. I look forward to our future conversation together. Feel free to contact me anytime. Thank you.

Jim Rafferty
Asbury Lay Leader
Phone: 315-408-9036
Email: jim.rafferty@gmail.com

FROM THE TRUSTEES

The past week we lost heat in the office. We called McCabe’s Plumbing and found out that one of the two Munchkins has died.

The 30-year old Munchkins heat the Pastor’s office, main office, Wesley Hall and the Chapel. We need to replace the Munchkins with a new boiler to keep these areas heated.

The cost to install a new boiler is \$13,000. As of right now we don’t have the money to do this. We are asking that you consider donating some extra money to the Capital Improvement Fund to help cover the cost. Thank you in advance.

The Trustees

NEWS FROM OUR *Mission Committee*

The Asbury congregation heard the call for help from our neighbors in Florida and gave over \$500 to help the hurricane victims of Ian and Nicole. The Mission Committee added to it and \$1,000 was sent to UMCOR and earmarked for the Victims of Hurricane Ian and Hurricane Nicole. Thanks to all who gave to this worthy mission.

Asbury has been asked by Watertown Urban Mission, The Salvation Army and The United Way to join forces, along with other churches in our community, to help support the homeless in our community by providing dinners 5 nights a week. Pastor Laura, The Missions Committee, and The Trustees have responded with a "yes, we will help." The hope is that Asbury would provide a meal and a little entertainment on Wednesday evenings. The details are still being worked out. A meeting was held on November 30th for those interested in helping. A team of over 21 people has been formed and will be ready to respond as soon as the plan is put into motion.



An Angel tree has been set up at the back of the sanctuary. The Salvation Army Angel Tree program helps provide Christmas gifts for hundreds of thousands of children around the country each year. Anonymous donors, like yourself, adopt these little "angels" and purchase what is requested. Please return unwrapped gifts and place them under the tree no later than Sunday, December 11th.

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

Last March, the Women's Board of the United Methodist Church decided after a 5 year deliberation, to rename their women's group to be more inclusive. The new name, United Women in Faith, reflects the goal of the organization to answer their calling to serve women, children, and youth in today's fast changing world.

On November 28, Carol Plemons, Susan Snell, Judy Cota, Deb VanHouten, and Sue Beaman met to discuss the future of the United Methodist Women. They decided to reinvigorate the organization by adopting the new name, updating the names on the banking account, with Deb VanHouten and Susan Snell, and naming new officers. President - Susan Snell; Vice President - Judy Cota; Secretary - Carol Plemons; Treasurer - Deb VanHouten; Sue Beaman - publicity.

The goal of this group is to make it more relevant to the needs of today's women, children, and youth. The decision was made to have a meeting on Saturday, Dec. 3, inviting all Asbury women to discuss what they see as our responsibilities to the women and children of Asbury and the community.

At the Dec. 3 meeting, three more women came. Decisions were made to sponsor children attending summer camps; to pay for two nursery staff needed for the 7:30 p.m. Christmas Eve service; to pay for two nursery staff for the first Sunday of each month and nursery supplies; and to send \$1500 to the Capital Improvement Fund for the new heating unit in Wesley Hall.

It was also suggested that Christmas baskets be made for our shut-ins and others. **On Monday, Dec. 12 at 10:00am, in the parlor**, you are invited to come with little items to put in the baskets: Kleenex, ornaments, cookies, hard candy, Clementines, etc. After the baskets are filled, we will each deliver two to the names on the list. This is a very meaningful way to spread our love and joy at Christmas.

Our January meeting will be on Saturday, January 21, at 9:00 am. We are looking forward to planning what you would like to accomplish in 2023. This is your women's group. Please come and enjoy the fellowship and serving others.

Christmas blessings to you all,
Susan, Carol, Deb, Judy, Sue, Cherrie, Tamara, Jean, and Anne Marie

SCRIPTURE OF THE WEEK

submitted by Max Bovee

December 4: Hebrews 8:10

"I will be their God, and they will be my people"

December 11: 1 Peter 2:1

"Stop being hateful! Quit trying to fool people, and start being sincere. Don't be jealous, or say cruel things about others"

December 18: 2 Peter 1:3

"His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life."

December 25: Revelation 5:13

"Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever."

January 2, 2023: Genesis 1:31

"God looked over all he had made, And saw that it was very good."

January 9, 2023: Genesis 2:7

"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."

January 16, 2023: Deuteronomy 11:19

"You shall teach God's Word to your children when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."

January 23, 2023: Joshua 1:9

"The Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

January 30, 2023: I Kings 8:58

"May He turn our hearts to Him, to walk in obedience to Him."



Rev. Peter and Catherine Mowers

December 29, 2001

William and Lisa Smith

December 12, 1997

Darrel and Connie Kicherer

January 2, 1987



December 1	Joanne Rhode
December 1	Paul Simmons
December 1	Lawrence Littell
December 2	Carole Bowles
December 2	Joseph Gianfagna
December 2	William Littell
December 5	William Van Houten
December 7	Michael Hill
December 10	Mary Malone
December 12	Sarah Lehman
December 12	Ernestina Owusuaa
December 12	Riley Jeurissen
December 18	Patricia Burdick
December 21	Olivia Lehman
December 22	Andrew Van Houten
December 22	Mary Smith



January 1	Benjamin Rhode
January 1	Ashley Cleveland
January 3	Vanessa Jeurissen
January 9	Darrel Kicherer
January 14	Frances Goutremout
January 14	John Garitz
January 15	Penni Farrington
January 16	Jaelah Liriano
January 17	Bonnie Peck
January 17	Erica Pettit
January 18	Jackson Jeurissen
January 20	Justin Hill
January 27	Jonda Ratigliano
January 27	David Simmons
January 27	Benjamin Cleveland
January 29	Dan Webb
January 29	Joyce McIntosh

ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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www.Facebook.com/Asbury13601

Address Service Requested



Join us for
SUNDAY WORSHIP
at
8:15 a.m.
10:15 a.m.



Open Hearts,
Open Minds,
Open Doors...
The people of the
United Methodist
Church

Asbury United Methodist Church

*No Matter Where You Are on
Life's Journey,
You Are Welcome Here!*



*"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
And through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you...
You are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you."
- Isaiah 43:1-2a, 4*

Christmas Week Worship Opportunities

Sunday, December 18th at 10:15 a.m.
The Children's Sunday School
will be presenting the message this day.

Saturday, December 24th at 5:00 p.m.
Family Christmas Eve Service

Saturday, December 24th at 7:30 p.m.
Lessons and Carols Christmas Eve Service

***Sunday, December 25th at 4:00 p.m.**
Christmas Day Worship Service

(*Please note: There will be no services at 8:15 am and 10:15 am.
Rather a combined service will be held at 4:00 pm).

